

Upper Hutt College pupils contributed to the spirit of Parihaka by performing a play based on Parihaka's peaceful protest. 'Parihaka 1881' was originally performed at the College earlier in the year and was directed by teachers Kiri McCorkindale and Jean Howell. The following articles are the pupil's impressions of the Parihaka Centenary.

The spirit of Parihaka has brought the cast of Maoris and Pakehas together into a bond which I can see will not be broken easily. Now I do not see myself as an enemy to the Maori, nor the Maori as an enemy of mine but simply as an unknown friend who like me is a New Zealander.

Through the love of the Te Ati Awa Tribe and hard work of our two directors, Auntie Jean and Nan, we are now one people who have a home in Taranaki, Parihaka.

During the weekend stay at Parihaka, the doors were opened before us. Inside these doors we saw many hundreds of Maoris reveal their love for their broken tribe and even for the pakeha, whose ancestors had been the cause for Parihaka's downfall. Certainly there was no ill-feeling, instead there was a sense of closeness between the two races that even the bad weather could not separate them apart.

It has been an unbelievable experience performing the play "Parihaka 1881" and to have had a tiny grasp of the Maori spirit at the Parihaka Marae. Before becoming a cast member of the play, I had very little love and respect for the Maori people but now this is reversed thanks to Auntie Jean and Nan who had the determination to direct the play despite the differences that existed within the cast. As a result the play has introduced us into the Maori world which is a great privilege to be in.

And to the Aunties we met at the marae, thanks again for your love and encouragement to the cast and the play. It has been an unforgettable experience being with your people and Parihaka.

Murtle

Play directors — Kiri McCorkindale (left) and Jean Howell.



I think the most important thing in the whole weekend was performing the play at the place where it actually happened 100 years ago. You could almost see Te Whiti and Tohu standing talking to the people and standing up on top of Mount Rolleston. It wasn't difficult to imagine the cannon being brought into position and the people sitting on the marae below.

Coming as a Pakeha to a marae for the very first time, I felt very out of place for the first half of the weekend. My ancestors had been at Parkihaka, but on the other side. The side of the Pakeha. So I had even more reason to feel out of place. Yet I came away with a feeling of belonging.

It was an unforgettable experience.

Linda O'Sullivan



Te Whiti — Patrick Melaugh (right) and Tohu — Brett Waiwai.

Total cast of 'Parihaka 1881' as performed by Upper Hutt College.

